



Landscaping & Grounds-Keeping

Use equipment in good repair with functional mufflers, with the lowest decibel rating possible. Electric equipment is often quieter than gas-powered equipment. The Town regulates what hours landscaping equipment can be used, as well as the maximum decibel levels of noise permitted. Call the Police

Department at 617-730-2222 for current restrictions. For reviews and more information about types of leaf blowers and lawn mowers, which are large contributors to landscape-related noise, visit the following website:

<http://www.consumersearch.com>

General



External noise may be masked by a white noise generator. This background noise sounds like the noise from an unused TV channel. Further information is provided in the following link:

www.naturestapestry.com/whitenoise2.html

If you are unable to resolve noise issues yourself, the following Town Departments may regulate noise control issues, depending on the type of issue: Building (617-730-2100), Health (617-730-2300), Police (617-730-2222)

Additional Resources on Noise and Health

¹World Health Organization. 2001. Occupational and Community Noise.

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs258/en/>

American Speech-Language Association. 2007. Noise and Hearing Loss.

<http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/disorders/noise.htm>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1981. Noise Effects Handbook.

<http://www.nonoise.org/library/handbook/handbook.htm>

World Health Organization. 1999. Guidelines for Community Noise.

<http://www.who.int/docstore/peh/noise/guidelines2.html>.

Noise Pollution Clearinghouse <http://www.nonoise.org>

The information provided in this brochure is for guidance purposes only. Each noise impact is usually assessed on a case by case basis. The Town of Brookline assumes no responsibility for the implementation of any of these recommendations. The activities noted above may not be violations of the Town Noise Control By-Law. While some example products are given, the Town does not endorse any particular product or supplier.

Town of Brookline Noise By-Law Committee

Suggestions for Reducing Noise Pollution

Be a Good Neighbor!



Typically not seen as a threat to health by the general public, noise pollution is increasingly receiving attention as a quality of life issue. Noise has been associated with poor attentiveness, reading performance, and problem solving; hearing impairment; communication interference; sleep disturbance; cardiovascular and psychological problems; and changes in social behavior.¹

In recent years, the Town of Brookline Board of Selectmen and the Police, Health, and Building Departments have received various noise complaints from individuals residing in, working in, or visiting the town. In 2006, a significant number of the complaints reported to the police department were noise-related. To assist Brookline citizens in finding ways to minimize excessive community noise without involving Town authorities, the Town offers the following suggestions.

To see a copy of the Town Noise Control By-Law, visit:

<http://www.townofbrooklinemass.com/townclerk/By-law/ARTICLE%208.15.doc>

Loud Music from Stereos in Abutting Residences
Low frequency speakers are one of the worst offenders of noise pollution. Sub-woofers and low frequency speakers should be moved from the floor and placed on a foam pad or matting, such as a double layer of rugs. Place speakers as far away as possible and oriented away from abutters. Acoustic panels may also assist in reducing noise. Further information is provided in the following link:



<http://www.illbruck-sonex.com/products.php>

Loud Music from Instruments

Heavy wall drapes or acoustic panels installed where instruments are played may help reduce music volume. Further information is provided in the following link: <http://www.illbruck-sonex.com/products.php>

Drums: Consider purchasing practice drums or pads, which are made of rubber or another sound-absorbing material and will allow you to practice without producing excessive noise.



Pianos: Loud piano music may be reduced by putting heavy padding under the legs of the piano. An electronic keyboard can be used in place of a piano for practicing.

Electronic Instruments: Speakers connected to electronic instruments can be replaced by head phones. You can also adjust the instrument volume control. Acoustic panels may also assist in reducing noise to abutters.

Party and Outdoor Events

As a part of a good neighbor policy, you can limit the noise at party events by keeping the noise indoors and as low as possible. Loud music and other excessive noise should also be kept as low as possible and away from abutters. Suggest to your guests that they leave quietly and to be considerate of the neighbors. Loud music and other excessive noise may be cited as a violation of the Town of Brookline Noise Control By-Law. Please visit the following link to review the regulation:

www.town.brookline.ma.us/TownClerk/By-law/ARTICLE%208.15.doc

Athletic and Recreational Activities



Brookline Recreation Department regulations limit engagement in loud outdoor athletic activities, such as basketball, to daytime hours. Please be sure to follow posted time restrictions for all town playgrounds and athletic fields. Be considerate of your neighbors. If you are planning to construct a basketball court outside your own home, keep in mind that some ground surfaces are better at minimizing noise than others; the more shock-absorbing the material, the better the sound absorption. The following links give some examples of possible surfaces:

sporteksurfaces.com; www.tracklite.com; www.bostonrhino.com



Noise from Heavy Walking from an Overhead Apartment

Using area rugs or installing other acoustical barriers like wall to wall carpet or cork flooring may reduce noise from walking in shoes. Removing shoes may also minimize this noise. Consider setting up a meeting with your neighbors to discuss and find solutions to noise issues.

Street Noise

If you live on a noisy street, windows may be upgraded to a higher acoustic transmission loss. Further information and examples of sound-reducing window suppliers are provided in the following links:

<http://www.soundproofwindows.com>

<http://www.soundproofwindowtreatments.com>

Construction Noise

Communicate with surrounding apartments as to how long the construction noise will take place. Be considerate of your neighbors. Contractors must be aware of any building permit requirements for when work is and is not allowed. Unless a waiver has been issued, the Noise By-Law does not permit excessive noise from construction activities between the hours of 7pm and 7am Monday through Friday, and between the hours of 6pm and 8:30am on weekends and holidays. For more regulations, visit the Town of Brookline Building Department website at <http://www.townofbrooklinemass.com/building/>. For acceptable noise (decibel) levels, see the Noise Control By-Law.



Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Units



External Mechanical Equipment: External air conditioning may be subject to the Brookline Noise By-Law. Enclosing the unit with an acoustic barrier may reduce unwanted noise. Fan speeds may be able to be adjusted to a lower speed depending on your particular unit. In some instances, the unit may require servicing by a qualified technician to reduce noise.

Window Air Conditioners: Lower the fan speed on window air conditioner units. Make sure the window unit is not vibrating from improper mounting. In some instances, the unit may require servicing by a qualified technician to reduce noise. If enclosing a unit with an acoustic barrier, be sure to check with the manufacturer's specification on clearance distances. The motor may overheat if designed improperly.

If you are purchasing new equipment, it is highly recommended that you consider buying equipment with the lowest possible decibel level. Equipment can also be placed as far away as possible from neighbors to reduce noise.